



**BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**February 17, 2026**

The regular meeting of the **Contra Costa Resource Conservation District** was held Tuesday, February 17, 2026, Diablo Valley College, Pleasant Hill, California.

**DIRECTORS PRESENT:** Walter Pease, Renee Fernandez-Lipp, Bethallyn Black, Lorena Castillo & Igor Skaredoff

**ASSOC. DIRECTORS PRESENT:** Martin Steinpress, Derene Allen & Tracey Rogers Brandt  
Remote: Bob Peoples & Chris Choate

**RCD STAFF PRESENT:** Chris Lim, Ben Weise & Patty Pell  
Remote: Heidi Petty

**NRCS STAFF PRESENT:** Luis Rivera-Cruz

**DIRECTORS EXCUSED:** None

**Call to Order:** Renee Fernandez-Lipp called the meeting to order at 8:32 A.M.

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE:**  
Erik Stromberg, Restoration Director, Restoration Design Group  
Richard Grassetto, Grassetto Environmental Consulting  
Indy Rishi Singh

**ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:** (Gov. Code 54954.2 (b)): None added

**NRCS REPORT:** Luis Rivera-Cruz introduced himself for the benefit of new members, reviewed the number of 2026 applicants across NRCS programs and provided a brief overview of each program's purpose. Luis Rivera-Cruz concluded by announcing a new program supporting generative agriculture practices with follow-up measurements.

**PRESENTATIONS:** No presentation

**CONSENT CALENDAR:**

- Item 7.1-Approve January 20, 2026 Board Minutes
- Item 7.2-Accept December 2025 & January 2026 Financial Reports

**Motion:** Walter Pease moved to approve items 7.1 & 7.2; seconded by Bethallyn Black.  
**Motion carried 3:1.**

**Ayes:** Pease, Black & Fernandez-Lipp

**Nays:** None  
**Abstain:** Castillo  
**Absent:** Skaredoff (arrived late)

**DETERMINATION ITEMS:**

**8.1 Approve Resolution 2026-02 Recommending Board Appointments to Two Open Board Seats.**

Each candidate introduced themselves and responded to Board questions, including what unique contributions they would bring to the Board and what improvements they would like to see.

Following a secret ballot, the Board voted to recommend Martin Steinpress and Soumya Suresh for appointment by the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors.

**Ayes:** Pease, Black, Fernandez-Lipp & Castillo  
**Nays:** None  
**Abstain:** Skaredoff

**8.2 Approve Amendment with California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) to extend Water Efficiency Technical Assistance (WETA) Grant to March 31, 2027.**

Ben Weise reviewed the purpose of the extension and described the testing used to identify energy conservation and water distribution improvements.

**Motion:** Bethallyn Black moved to approve; seconded by Lorena Castillo.  
**Motion carried 5:0.**

**Ayes:** Pease, Black, Castillo, Skaredoff & Fernandez-Lipp  
**Nays:** None

**8.3 Approve Resolution 2026-01 Certifying the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Marsh Creek Restoration Project.**

Ben Weise and consultant Richard Grassetti answered questions regarding the Environmental Impact Report. Ben Weise described the project location and explained why a CEQA review was required. The Board discussed options for sediment replacement.

**Motion:** Walter Pease moved to approve; seconded by Igor Skaredoff.  
**Motion carried 5:0.**

**Ayes:** Pease, Black, Castillo, Skaredoff & Fernandez-Lipp  
**Nays:** None

**8.4 Approve Amendment Extending Phase 1 Contract with Environmental Science Associates (ESA).**

Heidi Petty provided an update on the contract and the status of the hold harmless agreement.

**Motion:** Walter Pease moved to approve; seconded by Lorena Castillo.  
**Motion carried 5:0.**

**Ayes:** Pease, Black, Castillo, Skaredoff & Fernandez-Lipp

**Nays:** None

**8.5 Approve Phase 2 Contract with Environmental Science Associates (ESA) for Peyton Slough Marshes - Water Quality Improvements and Management SEP.**

Heidi Petty described Phase 2 activities and the project timeline.

**Motion:** Walter Pease moved to approve; seconded by Bethallyn Black.

**Motion carried 5:0.**

**Ayes:** Pease, Black, Castillo, Skaredoff & Fernandez-Lipp

**Nays:** None

**8.6 Determine Board's Voting Recommendations for CARCD Officers, Bylaws, and Resolutions.**

Following discussion and individual votes, the Board recommended:

President: Rick Gomez

Vice President: Peter Braudrick

Treasurer: Matt Hurley

Bylaws: Approve Amended Bylaws

Resolutions: Vote as recommended by CARCD

**Action:** Patty Pell will submit the CARCD ballot

**8.7 Consider Signing Letter of Support for AB1699 ("Good Fire Act").**

Ben Weise described the burn bot's technology and the intent of the legislation. The Board discussed preferred revisions to the wording should the legislation move forward.

**Motion:** Igor Skaredoff moved to approve; seconded by Lorena Castillo.

**Motion carried 5:0.**

**Ayes:** Pease, Black, Castillo, Skaredoff & Fernandez-Lipp

**Nays:** None

**8.8 Approve Travel Authorization Expense Request for Renee Fernandez-Lipp to attend the California Special District Association (CSDA) 2026 Annual Conference.**

Renee Fernandez-Lipp described the conference topics, the benefits of attending, and shared her past experiences.

**Motion:** Lorena Castillo moved to approve; seconded by Bethallyn Black.

**Motion carried 4:0.**

**Ayes:** Pease, Black, Castillo & Skaredoff

**Nays:** None

**Abstain:** Fernandez-Lipp

**8.9 Approval Contract Amendment with Alameda County RCD for biomonitoring services.**

Ben Weise reviewed the amendment, monitoring requirements, reason for the cost increase and the funding source covering the overage.

**Motion:** Walter Pease moved to approve; seconded by Igor Skaredoff.

**Motion carried 5:0.**

**Ayes:** Pease, Black, Castillo, Skaredoff & Fernandez-Lipp

**Nays:** None

**DISCUSSION:** Chris Lim led a brief discussion regarding the Board's preference for handling minor contract amendments. Staff will develop a draft policy based on discussion for future Board consideration.

**REPORTS:**

**10.1** President Reports—Renee Fernandez-Lipp provided an update on her current standing with PG&E and expressed appreciation for the increased interest in Board positions.

**10.2** Directors' Reports –

Bethallyn Black announced several upcoming events and will send details to staff for distribution.

Martin Steinpress expressed interest in establishing a CSDA account to begin training.

**10.3** Staff Reports—There were no questions

**10.4** Executive Director Reports—Chris Lim provided updates on new grant applications and potential project funding opportunities.

**Motion:** Bethallyn Black moved to adjourn; seconded by Igor Skaredoff.

President Renee Fernandez-Lipp adjourned the meeting at 10:49 a.m.

**Respectfully submitted, Patty Pell, Board Clerk, CCRCD**